GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1563
ANSWERED ON:27.11.2007
EXPLORATION OF MINERALS
Shaheen Shri Abdul Rashid

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has 1,50,000 square kilometer mine site in Indian Ocean for exploration of mineral resources;

(b) if so, whether deep ocean resources represent an exceptionally large and potentially important mineral resource;

(c) the steps taken to develop an integrated system for exploration, exploitation, mining and processing of these resources; and

(d) the details of target fixed/achievement made by the Government in respect of exploration of mineral resources from Indian Ocean during each of the last three years, till date, State- wise and mineral-wise ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY)

(a) & (b) : As per information given by Ministry of Earth Sciences, an area of 150,000 square kilometer in the Central Indian Ocean under United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was allotted to India for carrying out exploration and developmental activities for polymetallic nodules programmes of which, after obligatory relinquishment of 50% of area, 75,000 square kilometer has been retained by India. The resource potential in the retained area is of the order of 380 million tonnes of polymetallic nodules which contain minerals like copper, nickel, cobalt and manganese.

(c) : Central Government has enacted the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002 and framed Offshore Areas Mineral Concession Rules, 2006, to provide for development and regulation of mineral resources in the territorial water, continental shelf, exclusive economic zone and other maritime zones of India and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

(d) : As per information given by Ministry of Earth Sciences, as part of polymetallic nodules programme, multibeam bathymetry survey has been carried out in the 75,000 square kilometer area in the Indian Ocean to study the topography, and sampling has been carried out at different grid intervals in selected blocks.